Will nothing calm the frightful beating of my heart? The whole summer oppresses it. Yesterday a long bicycle ride, more exalted than crushed by the heat. At the Laurens house a rather warm reception, to be sure — cordial, even friendly. But what can I do about it? Between Pierre Laurens and me I feel a greater distance than ever. All my sympathy is concentrated on Paul Laurens and on his young wife, who strikes me every time I see her as a better and more charming wife. Pierre's conversation, all made up of peevishness, suppresses everything he comes into contact with. In advance I feel his irony ready for any stupidity I might say— which I necessarily say. The only resource with him is to play stupid, to act the fool, to be very careful to say nothing sensible or sincere or that you care about. After an hour of this game I am done in and demoralized in my soul. Yet I am well aware that this hostile mood in him is only a defense; he takes as a personal attack anything around him that succeeds.

Wonderful return. Apparent serenity of the harvest labors in the fields. Solemn approach of evening. I wander like a madman amidst this peace as arid to me as the desert.

31 *July*

I have gone back to work with a certain regularity, but I make very slow progress. I spend hours on a group of sentences that I shall completely rewrite the next day. The scene in Genevi&ve's room, in particular, when he finds her kneeling, gave me great difficulty. But I admire now all the things I succeeded *in not saying,* in KEEPING BACK. (I think for some time of the virtue that "reserve" can become in a writer. But who, today, can appreciate it?) I try to consider patience as my greatest quality; in any case it is the one I must above all encourage in me. I write "patience"; I ought to say "obstinacy"; but what is really needed is a *supple obstinacy.*

I have again begun my piano-practice two hours a day (Beethoven's -sonatas). Every evening, before going to bed, I read a few pages of HebbeFs correspondence. Interesting indeed, and written in a rather palpitating language, but I have not yet felt him speak to me *directly.*

Read several articles in the recent *Revue des deux mondes,* in the latest *Mercure,* etc. In spite of all the good I heard of it, I got very little pleasure from Georges de La Sailed book on the Manchurian war. Just now I am finishing (in translation) Hugo Ganz's *Russia, Land of Riddles.*

In small doses, for the good of my health,

Stendhal's *Journal.*